rain-water pressed, and the force of the current would prevent the escape of any considerable quantity of foul air, while the water continued to enter at the base of the column into the common sewer. On the pressure ceasing from the outside, the opening would be closed, and sufficiently air-tight to cause the noxious vapour to ascend and become purified by passing through the gas flame, before it mixes with the external air."

An experiment on the practicability of destroying the foul air in sewers by means of a shaft and furnace is being tried, we understand, in the Blackfriars road.

THE CITY OF LONDON SEWERS' ACT.

The city of London Sewers' Act, which is to come into operation on the 1st January, 1849, and continue in force two years and a session, contains, amongst others, the following provisions:—

It continues as at present the powers of constructing, cleansing, and repairing sewers, and of paving, lighting, cleansing, and improving the streets of the city, in commissioners to be appointed under the common seal of the City by the Court of Common Council.

A map of the City to be provided, on which all sewers are to be marked, and all water and gas mains to be set down thereon; this map to be altered as necessary from time to time.

Sewers are vested in the commissioners, who are empowered to construct new sewers, discontinue and stop up or alter old sewers, and to ventilate, cleanse, and flush such sewers as may be needed; and for this purpose to build, carry, and continue the same through any land, building, or other place, which is not a public way, upon making full compensation. They are also empowered to make such new openings into the Thames as they may think necessary, or otherwise to collect the refuse for the purposes of manure, but so that no nuisance be thereby caused.

The water companies having mains within the City are required to supply the commissioners with water (if they can do so without injury to the regular supply of water for domestic purposes), for flushing the sewers, and for watering or cleansing the streets and pavements, or for supplying any public baths, cisterns, &c., for the use of the poorer classes, upon remuneration by the commissioners for the same; and in case of dispute, such remuneration to be fixed by two justices. Penalty for the non-supply of water as aforesaid, 50*l.* a day, except through frost, drought, or unavoidable accident.

Private drains are to be cleansed and repaired at owner's or occupier's cost, under commissioners' directions, and whenever required by them so to be cleansed or repaired; and private drains are not to be destroyed or obstructed by the commissioners in any of their works, under penalties.

Commissioners may call upon the owner of any house or building not already drained into the sewer, to construct a drain therefrom into the sewer, if the same be within 50 feet of any part of such house or building, on a lower level than such house or building, under commissioners' directions; and no house hereafter is to be built within the City unless a drain be constructed to the satisfaction of the commissioners.

Persons about to build or rebuild any house or building, or to make any drain therefrom into the sewer, are to give fourteen days' notice in writing of such intention to the commissioners, who are to determine the level on which such house, building, or drain, is to be built or made; and any house or building taken down within 12 feet of the ground is to be deemed a rebuilding. Power is given to the commissioners to demolish any house, building, or drain, erected or made contrary to their directions, or without such notice being sent as above. Penalty on making or altering sewers or drains without commissioners' leave, 10*l.*

All gulley-holes, gratings, or other openings of sewers, are to be trapped so as to prevent the effluvia from the sewer exhaling therefrom; and any one sweeping, raking, or placing any soil, dirt, &c., into any sewer, or over any sewer-grate, liable to a penalty of 5*l.*

Any gas company permitting or conveying any washings, or foul or offensive refuse of gas to run into any sewer, shall forfeit the sum of 200*l.* a day.

Commissioners empowered to appoint one or more legally-qualified medical practitioners of skill and experience to inspect and report periodically upon the sanitary condition of the City, to ascertain the existence of diseases, more especially epidemics, and to point out the existence of any nuisance or other causes injuriously affecting health; also as to most efficient modes of ventilating churches, chapels, schools, lodging-houses, or other public edifices; to be called "The Medical Officer of Health," and to pay them such salaries as they think fit.

Commissioners empowered to appoint one or more inspectors of nuisances to inquire into and report all cases of nuisance, neglect of scavengers, &c., whose duties are for the preservation of due order and cleanliness.

Full power given to the Commissioners and their officers to enter any land, house, or premises, to carry into execution the purposes of this Act; and to cause the erection of privies, water-closets, cisterns for water, ash-pits, &c., in any premises, under penalties; and to regulate offensive trades, as candle-houses, &c.

No grave hereafter to be used in the City for interment, which shall not leave five feet clear of soil above the coffin; and any sexton offending, to be suspended from his office, and made liable to a penalty of 20*l.* Private vaults and catacombs excepted under certain limitations.

Persons causing offensive smells, or carrying offensive matter in the streets, made liable to certain penalties.

Commissioners empowered to light the public streets, and all public lamps vested in them; and persons damaging them made liable to certain penalties, or to make satisfaction for the same.

Pavements and other materials vested in the commissioners, and power given them to pave the streets and alter their levels, and alter the mains and pipes as they shall think best, excepting courts, &c., of which the freehold is vested in the owner of adjoining property, in which case, such owner is to pave and repair them.

Commissioners empowered to alter and fix the names of streets, to order the numbering of houses, &c., with penalties on persons obliterating or altering the same.

Commissioners are also empowered to prevent buildings projecting over the line of street from being rebuilt in such line; also to set back and remove various existing projections and obstructions, upon compensation being made; and to cause all ruinous and dangerous houses, &c., to be repaired.

THE USE OF DUTY-FREE BRICKS.

Having been asked on several occasions the extent to which bricks, *duty free*, can be legally used, we are glad to be enabled to give a statement on the subject, made by the Board of Excise some years ago, in reply to the following queries proposed by Mr. John Higgins, of Alford:—

"1st. Whether bricks (duty free) can be legally applied in building sea gowts, sluices, dams, culverts under roads and rivers, gate tunnels, and such other edifices as are exclusively appurtenant to, and necessary for, works of sewers?

2ndly. Whether they cannot be legally used in the construction and rebuilding of bridges crossing over public drains, in cases where the renewal of the bridge is rendered necessary by the enlargement or improvement of the drain?"

The answer was:—

"By 7 Geo. 4, c. 49, s. 3, it is enacted that it shall be lawful for any person or persons to make tiles or bricks for the sole purpose of draining wet or marshy land, without being charged or chargeable with any duty for and in respect of such tiles or bricks; provided that all such tiles or bricks shall be stamped or moulded by the person or persons making the same with the word 'Drain' in or near the centre of one of the surfaces of such tile or brick, in so plain and distinct a manner that the same may be easily and distinctly legible to any officer of excise or other person examining the same, both before and after such tiles or bricks shall have gone through the process of burning and become fit for use: and if any person or persons making such tiles or bricks as aforesaid, or any other person or persons shall sell or deliver, use or employ, any such tiles or bricks so stamped or moulded as aforesaid for any other purpose than that of draining wet or marshy land, he, she, or they, for every such offence shall forfeit and lose the sum of 50*l.*; such penalty to be recovered and applied as any other penalty incurred under any Act or Acts of Parliament relating to the duties of excise.

"The words of the clause will be seen to be very extensive; and, it being a remedial Act, extensive as they are, they are to be liberally construed. On this principle, the words, 'for the sole purpose of draining wet or marshy land,' in my opinion authorise the use of these bricks in the construction of all such works as are necessary for rendering the drainage effectual. Amongst these would be the works enumerated, sea gowts, sluices, dams, culverts under roads or rivers, gate tunnels, &c. For whatever work of this description is necessary for effecting or preserving the drainage, in the construction of it these bricks may lawfully be used. The collector has referred to one of the main drains being made applicable to purposes of navigation: the question in this case would be, are the bricks used in any works which are to improve the navigation of this sluice, or are they used for the preserving of it as a drain? In the former case, the bricks must be duty paid; in the latter, drainage-bricks may be used. The question as to the bridges is more doubtful; but this distinction seems to be proper to be made,—if by widening a drain, a bridge is required to be taken down and rebuilt, and it is done by those who are effecting the drainage there, in the reconstruction of it duty-free bricks may be used; but in any other repair of the bridge, by the county or parish, the bricks used must be duty-paid. With respect to rivers, I understand Mr. Higgins to allude to culverts under them: if any sluices in the river banks, or in any drains, are constructed for the purposes of irrigation in dry weather, and not for the purpose of draining or carrying off water from the lands, it will not be legal to use the drainage-bricks in the construction of such works. Mr. Higgins should be informed that if the bricks are sold or applied for any other purpose than those of the drainage, a penalty of 50*l.* is incurred."

THE BUILDING MANIA.

No one who has recently travelled with his eyes open in search of a home, a friend, or a little fresh air, in the environs of this overgrown metropolis, can have failed to observe that houses are springing up in all quarters for the reception of the ever-increasing population of densely-populated London. In the vicinity of other large cities, especially if they boast the advantage of a railway, the same observation will have been made. There is no lack of brick and mortar, east, west, north, and south; our cities are extending themselves into the country. Money is scarce; the whole nation is in difficulties; but houses spring up everywhere, as though capital were abundant—as though one-half of the world were on the look out for investments, and the other half continually in search of eligible family residences, desirable villas, and aristocratic cottages, which have nothing in the world of the cottage about them except the name.

Houses, we say, spring up everywhere in the outskirts of our great towns. A suburb, in these days, is one congeries of crude brick and mortar. It is the most melancholy thing in existence. Streets, squares, crescents, terraces, Albert villas, Victoria villas, and things of the same inviting character, stand up everywhere against the horizon, and minutely beseech us to take them. You may get a new house, of almost every conceivable pattern, and at any conceivable price down to 60*l.* per annum. You may take your choice, according to the length of your purse, of "noble reception rooms" and "neat parlours." But your purse must have some length to accomplish even this latter. There is a leaven of aristocracy in the parlour with folding-doors. We only build, now-a-days, for the gentry.

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